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REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT ON THE FEDERAL ASSISTANCE REVIEW U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SUMMARY OF THREE YEAR FAR ACTIONS

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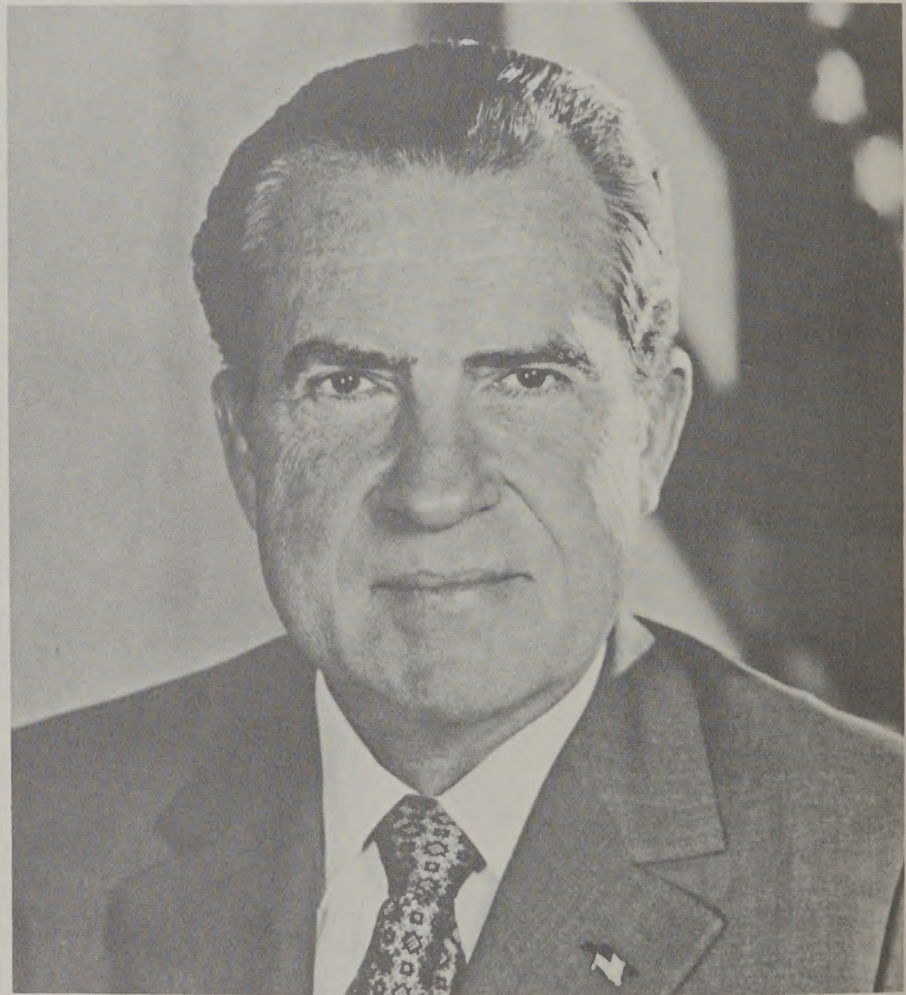
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REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT ON THE FEDERAL ASSISTANCE REVIEW ²⁰²¹ U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SUMMARY OF THREE YEAR FAR ACTIONS





The principles of the New Federalism are based on the idea that results can best be achieved by returning power, funds and authority to the governments closest to the people. But the New Federalism also requires better understanding and cooperation between levels of government, so that each may better serve America both now and in the future.

Richard Nixon
August 25, 1971

525001

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Federal Assistance Review

On March 27, 1969, you ordered a Government-wide effort to decentralize and simplify the machinery of Federal aid for the purpose of improving delivery of services to the American people through the State and local governments. Under the leadership of the Office of Management and Budget, there was initiated the Federal Assistance Review Program to comply with your directive. I am privileged to report to you on the accomplishments of the Department of Agriculture in this three-year program.

With a field delivery system at the county and local level reaching directly to the citizens and communities served and a traditional philosophy of decentralization and close cooperative working relationships with States and local units of government, this Department is organizationally and conceptually in harmony with the principles of Federalism inherent in the Federal Assistance Review. So that we could assure that our program processes for delivery of services meet the needs of the public served with the least red tape possible and that States and local units

of government are increasingly relied upon in our program delivery processes, a Department-wide review of all programs was made with these results.

It is the announced policy of this Department that States and local units of government shall be given full opportunity to assume a greater share of program activities commensurate with their willingness to accept the responsibility and their ability to carry it out within the framework of the cooperative approach traditional with this Department. At our invitation, States have submitted some 111 proposals for increasing their role in the operation of Agriculture programs. Many proposals have been implemented with others under consideration. For instance, 47 States now carry out shell egg surveillance to assure that eggs harmful to humans do not enter the marketplace; this represents 175 man-years of State employment for a program Federally funded at \$2.5 million. To strengthen State and local government capability to assume increased program operations, the Department has provided them a wide range of assistance in the form of management appraisal services, training in technical and management fields, problem-solving assistance, and the like.

The Department's organization for delivery of program services and coordination with other

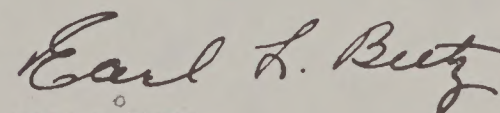
Federal agencies has been improved. The number of organizational field structures through which Agriculture programs are delivered was reduced from 84 to 69; realignment of these structures wherever feasible to conform to the Standard Federal Regions was achieved or is in process; Secretarial liaison officials have been designated to the Federal Regional Councils; analysis to determine the optimum geographic area to be reasonably served by our major field programs is nearing completion; a program to consolidate USDA field offices into one building in each County and State headquarters location is moving forward (1,669 locations now provide "one-stop service"); and a number of other actions were taken to decentralize organizational units and decision-making to the field and improve field operations.

The Department delivers program services to the public in a number of ways including grants, loans, cooperative arrangements, and technical assistance. Using management analysis techniques, every program process was reviewed and possibilities for simplification identified. Reduction in processing time or effort was effected in 37 different programs. In the loan process for rural single family housing construction, as an illustration, an average reduction in processing time of one-third or 54 days was

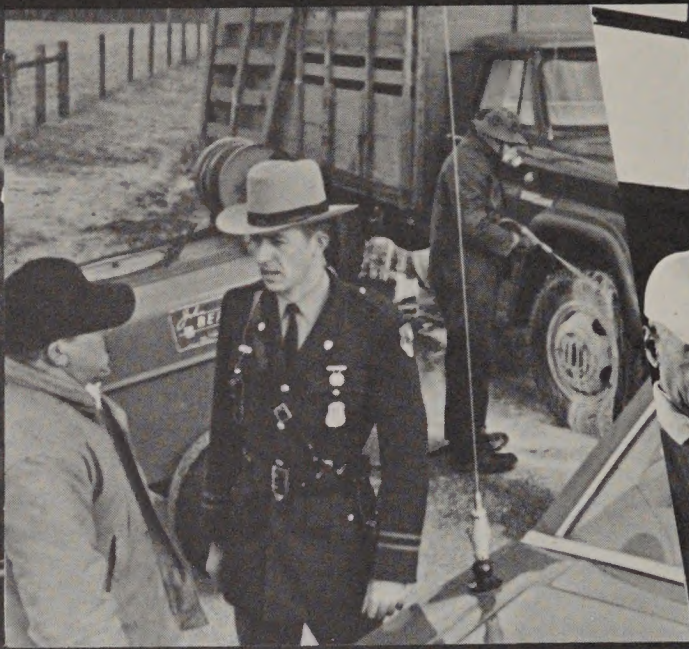
achieved by several procedural changes. We cut red tape in many programs through delegating decision-making authority and streamlining procedures.

The concepts of the Federal Assistance Review have proven to be sound in their application to the programs of this Department. However, it is apparent from this report that efforts must continue if we are to gain the full benefits of these accomplished and planned improvements in the delivery of services. I have accordingly issued a directive to program managers of this Department calling for increased and continuing emphasis to expanding participation by State and local governments and by the private sector in the operation of the programs of this Department and for streamlining the administrative processes used in the delivery of program services.

Herewith is the Department of Agriculture report of accomplishments in the first three years of the Federal Assistance Review program.



EARL L. BUTZ
Secretary



CHAPTER 1

INCREASE RELIANCE ON STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Since establishment of the Department in 1862, the States and the Department have cooperatively set up ways to handle regional and national problems without domination by either Federal or State authorities.

During the first year of the Department's Federal Assistance Review program, more definite criteria was developed for Federal or State operation of 19 inspection, grading, and regulatory programs.

The Secretary of Agriculture last year directed each agency to select programs where we could move forward with increasing reliance on State operation of these programs. A task force of State and USDA officials established by the Secretary, has contacted each of the 50 States about their participation in USDA programs. Some 111 proposals have been received from over half the States for increased State participation.

STATE OPERATION OF USDA PROGRAMS EXPANDED

MARKETING AND INSPECTION RESPONSIBILITIES DECENTRALIZED TO STATES. PROPOSALS FOR PARTICIPATION IN FEDERAL PROGRAMS CONTINUE TO COME IN FROM STATES WITH 20 STATES NOW HAVING COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE.

Proposals have been received from 25 States interested in assuming responsibility for the following AMS programs: Livestock market news reporting, meat grading, egg grading, poultry grading, egg products inspection, grain and commodity inspection, warehouse examination, and dairy plant survey. Here is the scorecard:

Proposals received	73
Proposals implemented	23
Proposals in process	19
Proposals tabled (for reasons such as legislation needed)	31

In keeping with the concepts of the FAR Program, the Agricultural Marketing Service, (AMS) asked the States to perform inspection of egg products under Federal supervision, which became mandatory on July 1, 1971. In California, which produced 1.8 million pounds of egg

products last year, 75 of the 98 plants are already under inspection. Sixteen of these plants are fully staffed with State inspectors, and the remainder will be staffed by State employees as Federal inspectors are phased out through attrition. Cooperative agreements are in effect with 21 States, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Some 50 man-years of State employees, financed by the AMS at a cost of \$542,700 for Fiscal Year (FY) 1973, perform the inspection.

Agreements have already been entered into with 47 States to carry out, under Federal supervision, the mandatory shell egg surveillance functions. State employees, under these cooperative agreements with AMS, will see that eggs harmful to human beings do not enter the marketplace. 20,000 egg packing plants and hatcheries fall under their surveillance; 175 man-years of State employees, financed by Federal funds of 2.5 million, are required in FY1973.

REGULATORY PROGRAMS DECENTRALIZED TO STATES

TEN STATES ARE CARRYING OUT AN INCREASED ROLE IN FEDERAL ANIMAL HEALTH AND PLANT PROTECTION PROGRAM. NINE PROPOSALS FROM STATES HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED IN THE MEAT AND POULTRY INSPECTION PROGRAM.

Cooperative agreements have been signed with 10 of 15 States which had made 26 proposals to carry out Federal Animal Health and Plant Health Inspection Programs. Nine States are carrying out Federal plant protection programs financed at over \$500,000. One State will carry out a Federal animal health program Federally funded at \$50,000.

Twelve proposals have also been received from 10 States to participate in Meat and Poultry Inspection and laboratory testing programs. Nine have been implemented to provide for cross-utilization of Federal and State employees (without exchange of funds), and for employee interchange in inspection activities, and for use of 5 State laboratories to carry out a Federal service for detecting excessive residues in foods on a reimbursable basis.

TRAINING AND OTHER MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE

Concurrently with expanding State participation in USDA programs, the need for greater training and management assistance increased. These needs are being met through expanding training assistance and a variety of management aids including on the ground organization and management appraisal where requested. Following are examples.

“ROUND-ROBIN” PLAYED BY STATES AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

*FIVE STATE LABORATORIES COOPERATE WITH
THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN DETECTING
EXCESSIVE RESIDUES AND OTHER HARMFUL
ELEMENTS IN FOODS.*

Four State laboratories in California and one in Kentucky, all of which were rigorously tested by Federal laboratory technicians, are cooperating with the over-taxed Federal laboratories to perform analyses to prevent impure foods from reaching the public. The California labs are scheduled to perform about 1,000 complex residue analyses annually. The Kentucky lab makes approximately 140 chemical analyses per week. Ongoing quality control is maintained through the use of a recently developed “round-robin” technique. Each lab in the “round-robin” randomly selects a sample already analyzed and sends part of it to another lab, where it is routinely sent through the analytic process as just another sample. The results of the two analyses are compared at headquarters and any discrepancies are checked for cause. All Federal labs and the five State labs are included in the round-robin. The round-robin is open to all State labs, however, and interest in joining is high.

The use of the State labs with the round-robin technique is providing better protection and faster service to the public.

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TAKE OVER FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAMS

*THREE INDIAN TRIBES OPERATE THEIR OWN
FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM. THE FOOD
AND NUTRITION SERVICE PROVIDE MANAGE-
MENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO
ENABLE 46 COUNTIES TO TAKE OVER FED-
ERAL OPERATION OF FOOD DISTRIBUTION
PROGRAMS.*

Distribution of surplus foods to the needy is the responsibility of Food and Nutrition Service and the cooperating States and counties. Food and Nutrition Service delivers the food to State warehouses, then a State agency distributes it to local distribution points, from where local authorities distribute the food to the needy.

A food distribution program was established in 1967, for the 1,000 counties with the lowest per capita earning ratios, to provide supplemental foods to needy families. Many of these counties had no previous experience in assistance programs and 49 were not willing and/or able to

“The Direct working agreement between the USDA, Western Region Office and the Shoshone and Arapaho Tribes, in our estimation this agreement has been a tremendous benefit to the Tribes.

“It has improved the ordering and distributing of commodities by having a larger selection to order. By having a larger selection, more of our people have been participating in the program available.”

Chairman
Shoshone and Arapaho Business Council
Wind River Reservation

operate their own programs. FNS undertook the conduct of the food distribution program in these 49 counties. A program of technical and management assistance was undertaken with the counties, and their States, with the result that all but three of them are now operating their own food distribution program or have requested a Food Stamp program.

A food distribution program affecting three Indian tribes was being terminated because one of the three States operating the program ended it in favor of a Food Stamp program, which the Indians did not want. The Food and Nutrition Service centered into an agreement with the Navajo, Shoshone, and Arapahoe Indian Tribal Councils, whereby FNS provides funds directly to the Councils to enable them to purchase surplus foods and distribute them directly to their Tribes. The program is thus more responsive to local conditions.

COOPERATIVE AUDITS

SEVENTY-FOUR STATE OR LOCAL AUDITS NOW ARE BEING PERFORMED COOPERATIVELY WITH USDA IN FOUR PROGRAMS, AS COMPARED TO APPROXIMATELY 20 PRIOR TO FAR.

As a result of a FAR study made in 1969, USDA's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) initiated a program to further encourage State and local agencies to audit (investigate) cooperative programs and to rely upon audits performed by or for such groups. Audit, or investigative guides were developed and issued to audit organizations in State and local governments cooperating in Food Stamp, Food Distribution, Child Nutrition, and Meat and Poultry Inspection Programs. In 1972, 45 States were visited to inventory their audit potential and the USDA programs being audited, determine their interest, and encourage and offer training assistance. Four audit seminars were held for State managers of cooperative food programs, and OIG personnel have been working closely with audit groups at State and local levels using the guidelines, seminars, and joint audits to train auditors. Negotiations are underway in three States to assign key OIG personnel under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act to provide management assistance and training. In the Milk Marketing Order Program, OIG is working toward using audits by Certified Public Accountant firms.

STATE MEAT AND POULTRY COMPLIANCE PROGRAMS

THIRTY STATES AND ONE TERRITORY HAVE SIGNED AGREEMENTS TO COORDINATE AND INTEGRATE FEDERAL AND STATE COMPLIANCE PROGRAMS TO ASSURE THAT MEAT AND POULTRY PRODUCTS MOVING IN MARKETING CHANNELS ARE WHOLESOME AND TRUTHFULLY LABELED WHEN THEY REACH THE CONSUMER.

All States and Territories can receive Federal financial and technical assistance for intrastate compliance activities when they have a compliance program that is equal to the Federal program. The project was designed to encourage States to (1) adopt a State compliance program, and (2) fully integrate their program with the Federal compliance program. The agreements signed with the States call for (1) common use of facilities, computer systems, equipment, personnel and training programs; (2) technical consultation and managerial assistance; and (3) common collection and use of information and data.

The goal is a single national compliance program operated jointly by the Federal and State governments in all States where both Federal and State Meat and Poultry Inspection Programs are in operation.

TRAINING PROVIDED TO STATE FORESTRY AND CONSERVATION EMPLOYEES

THE FOREST SERVICE CONDUCTED 34 COURSES IN ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT FOR STATE EMPLOYEES IN 22 STATES DURING THE THIRD YEAR OF FAR.

To assure a common approach to resource management between State and Federal employees, the Forest Service provides resource and administrative management training programs to interested States. This training and the common understanding of State resource management needs that result have contributed to what many States regard as higher level of cooperation between Federal and State employees and a significant improvement in operations.

"By making O.M.T. (Organization and Management Training) available to State employees, I felt a genuine interest, on the part of a Federal Agency, to assist a State agency because of a primary concern for the resource. There was no jealous distinction between

Federal and State agencies but all seemed to be public employees cooperating to reach a common objective in resource management."

Duane Shodeen
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

"The recent training session on Principles of Administrative Management conducted by your Division of Advisory Management Staff for our line supervisors was one of the most helpful training efforts we have ever had."

Ralph C. Winkworth
North Carolina State Forester

"Twenty-five of our supervisors attended the session. Without exception, each believes the experience was the most productive exercise in which he had participated . . . My thanks to you and the Forest Service for making the course available to us."

Thomas B. Bordon
Colorado State Forester

INTERGOVERNMENTAL EMPLOYEE INTERCHANGE

FORTY FEDERAL AND STATE EMPLOYEES INTERCHANGED DURING THE THIRD YEAR OF FAR.

The Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970 encourages Federal and State agencies to interchange employees. All State Departments of Agriculture were encouraged to participate in this program through the USDA Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture. Benefits accruing to both Federal and State organizations are: improved communications and better understanding and appreciation of each other's problems. The capability of States to take on responsibility for operation of Federal programs is improved by such interchanges, since Federal employees are assigned to States to help install such programs while State employees are assigned to Federal agencies for training as instructors and in particular technical and scientific areas. Federal employees gain a better understanding of State needs and how administration of Federal programs can be changed to be more responsive to individual State situations.

SCALE TESTING SKILLS IMPROVED

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IMPROVED THEIR SKILLS THROUGH SCALE TESTING WORKSHOPS HELD IN 9 STATES BY PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION.

There are 118 State, county, and city weights and measures agencies operating 181 scale testing units. Packers and Stockyards Administration has conducted workshops, aimed at establishing uniform scale testing standards with the States. Training includes livestock, monorail, and vehicle scale testing. Both State personnel and industry personnel participated in these meetings. The program provides protection to both livestock producers and buyers from losses due to faulty devices which cause inaccurate weights.

RURAL TOWN FORESTRY ASSISTANCE

COOPERATING RURAL TOWNS AND COMMUNITIES IN KANSAS CAN CREATE NATURAL BEAUTY IN DOWNTOWN AREAS, STREET RIGHTS-OF-WAY, PARKS, OPEN SPACES, AND CITY UTILITIES RIGHTS-OF-WAY

BY PLANTING TREES, SHRUBS, AND GRASS UNDER COMPREHENSIVE FORESTRY PROGRAMS SPONSORED BY THE FOREST SERVICE.

This is a pilot project developed by the Kansas State University's Cooperative Extension Service. The Forest Service approved the project and agreed to help fund it. The project, started in July 1971, has generated 98 requests from towns and communities, of which 10 have been given assistance in developing community action plans. Remaining requests will be handled as the Kansas State University's Cooperative Extension Service is able to schedule assistance. The Forest Service plans to begin similar programs in other States.

PREDOMINANTLY BLACK COLLEGES GET BIGGER PIECE OF THE ACTION

LAST YEAR THE EXTENSION SERVICE AND THE COOPERATIVE STATE RESEARCH SERVICE PROVIDED SPECIFICALLY EARMARKED FUNDS TO THE "1890" LAND-GRANT COLLEGES AND TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE IN 16 SOUTHERN AND BORDER STATES TO STRENGTHEN THEIR

CONTRIBUTION TO HELPING MANY AMERICANS ACQUIRE THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NECESSARY FOR THEM TO BECOME PART OF THE MAINSTREAM OF SOCIETY.

The Extension Service provided \$4 million and Extension Service personnel, working with these predominantly black institutions, developed guidelines to help them put into effect programs of special interest to certain groups, particularly those who find themselves in economically or socially disadvantaged situations.

The Cooperative State Research Service provided nearly \$9 million in specifically earmarked funds. Grants executed with these institutions strengthen them through improved staff capabilities, and course offerings, thus providing increased opportunities for staff and students to learn and contribute to American society through research in:

- (1) Human nutrition, including critical evaluation of malnourishment among children and adults in poverty families;
- (2) Rural development or investigation designed to improve opportunities in rural America; and
- (3) Problems of agricultural production and in the determination of basic biological knowledge

needed to attack agricultural problems.

SUPPLEMENTAL PRIVATE FINANCING FOR RURAL UTILITIES

DURING FISCAL YEAR 1972, THE NATIONAL COOPERATIVE FINANCE CORPORATION (CFC) HAD A LONG-TERM LOAN PROGRAM OF APPROXIMATELY \$77 MILLION, AND THE RURAL TELEPHONE BANK HAD A \$90 MILLION LOAN PROGRAM TO HELP MEET THE DEMAND FOR RURAL TELEPHONE AND ELECTRIC FINANCING REQUIREMENTS.

Present and prospective loan authorizations to the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) by Congress will no longer meet the demand for new capital. The National Cooperative Finance Corporation, a borrower-owned finance institution with membership of approximately 840 electric systems and statewide, regional, and national organizations, was established in 1969 with the assistance of REA. CFC expects to finance 60 to 70 percent of the major loan requirements of rural electric systems.

The Rural Telephone Bank, established by law, began lending operations in January 1972. The

planned Bank loan program for fiscal year 1973 is \$126 million.

These institutions provide assurance that major financing will be available in the future for the rural electric and telephone industries.

FOREST SERVICE AND STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY

THE USDA HAS TRADITIONALLY WORKED WITH STATES IN THE INTEREST OF A TOTAL FORESTRY PROGRAM EFFORT. STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY PROGRAM MANAGEMENT IS A PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITY. USDA FOREST SERVICE PERSONNEL ENCOURAGED AND HELPED STATE FORESTERS TO DEVELOP, IMPROVE, AND STRENGTHEN STATE ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS.

Through cooperative efforts of the Forest Service and on-the-ground efforts of the States, the following accomplishments are reported:

Fire protection is provided to over 521 million acres of forest and watershed lands.

About 138,000 of the Nation's 4 million private forest landowners are helped annually through the Cooperative Forest Management Program, and 16,000 forest processors are



Federal foresters inspect State seed orchard outplanting.



State and Federal foresters inspect tree seedlings at Pennsylvania's Mont Alto Nursery.

assisted. About 8.4 million acres of nonindustrial private woodlands benefit each year from this assistance.

About 500 million trees are shipped to landowners each year.

85 million genetically improved trees were produced from seeds from "seed orchards" last year. Thirty nine States are involved in this "Assistance to States for Tree Planting" program.

Thirty two States are presently cooperating in the forest insect and disease control program to detect, evaluate, and control harmful pests.

QUALITY CONTROL

THE FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE HELD TRAINING SESSIONS FOR PERSONNEL OF STATE AGENCIES INVOLVED IN THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM TO IMPROVE OVERALL ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM.

To improve overall Food Stamp Program administration, a quality control system, designed for determining eligibility for and proper payment and receipt of food stamps, was installed. Training, procedures, and instructions

have been provided to State program administrators. The control methods will be phased in over the coming year. Improvements in the program will result in fewer and smaller monetary losses in the program, and recipients will be treated more equitably.

ADVANCE FUNDING FOR FOOD PROGRAMS

ADVANCE FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE AVAILABLE TO STATE AGENCIES BY THE FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE. THESE ARRANGEMENTS HAVE MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR STATES WITH LIMITED RESOURCES TO PARTICIPATE MORE FULLY IN FNS PROGRAMS.

Certain Food and Nutrition Service program operations involved the reimbursement of State agencies for their expenses connected with performance of specific program actions. In the past, this required States to use their own money, sometimes for a considerable period of time. The Food and Nutrition Service installed new procedures and made advances and letters of credit systems available to State agencies under various FNS programs. Since States no longer are required to commit their funds for a

period of time for these programs, many are now able to participate more fully in the food programs of FNS.

FEDERAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM USED BY STATES

STATES WERE OFFERED THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN FTS.

A FAR Task Group working on a project to improve management capabilities of States recommended that States be given the opportunity to participate in the Federal Telecommunications System, a telephone system designed to provide economy (over commercial service) for long distance calls. States apply to the General Services Administration who, based on the States' use of long distance, determines whether there would be an advantage to the States to participate, and arranges accordingly.

STATES COMPETE FOR FUNDS

26 STATES WHO WERE ABLE TO DEVELOP THE MOST INNOVATIVE PROJECTS, IN ACCORD-

The Food Service Director of Chino Lake Joint School District, California, said, "I will be very interested to know what plans the USDA is making for the continuation of Nutrition Education Seminars. I personally feel this has been some of the finest professional assistance I have ever received, and I know many others who attended the Logan Seminar felt the same way."

The Supervisor of School Food Service for the Salt Lake City Board of Education wrote: "I have been reviewing our accomplishments this year, and have become aware of how many ideas we have been able to incorporate into our program from the Western School Food Service Seminar."

ANCE WITH CRITERIA PRESENTED, SHARES IN THE LIMITED FUNDS EXTENSION SERVICE HAS FOR IMPROVING THE DELIVERY OF EXTENSION WORK.

This year for the first time the Extension Service established and distributed uniform criteria for considering proposals to all States, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, and D.C. States competed by proposing projects in accordance with the criteria. All States gained by the intensive review of their cooperative extension work and by establishing the goals to improve the program. Extension Service plans to use States on their Review Committee on a voluntary basis. The experience of reviewing all project proposals will enable even greater opportunities for program appraisal and improvement.

INCREASED STATE AND LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR FOOD PROGRAMS

NEW FOOD STAMP AND CHILD NUTRITION REGULATIONS AIDED STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN OPERATING THE FOOD PROGRAMS. FIVE PILOT SEMINARS FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOOL STAFFS WERE HELD

TO IMPROVE CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS.

Getting and using the advice of local people has been a precept of the Food and Nutrition Service. Many suggestions from State and local officials and other program participants on the proposed regulations were incorporated into the new regulations, making them more responsive to the needs of both States agencies and the public.

To help the States improve the overall effectiveness of the Child Nutrition Programs, five food service seminars were conducted by the Food and Nutrition Service for teachers and related school staff. The experience gained was used to structure training programs involving nutrition education.

MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO STATES

FIVE STATES REQUESTED MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE IN THE THIRD YEAR OF FAR. THROUGH THE OFFICE OF INTER-GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS, THEIR STATE DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURE WERE OFFERED MANAGEMENT AND TECHNICAL

ASSISTANCE TO IMPROVE THEIR CAPABILITIES FOR INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN FEDERAL PROGRAMS.

Kansas Animal Health Department asked for help on office procedures and potential for automation. North Carolina and Oregon asked for help with office procedures and potential restructuring of fees in grain inspection. Massachusetts asked for a review of current Automatic Data Processing activities and a potential new use of ADP. One State—Mississippi—requested a review of all administrative and management activities of its Department of Agriculture and Commerce. Each State was helped. Some recommendations have been implemented and others scheduled. The Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce wrote:

"I was quite impressed with the team that visited our State under the Federal Assistance Review Program. The sincere effort made on the part of the members of that team was evident in their written report. We appreciated the suggestions made by the team, and plan to put into effect as many as possible. I would strongly recommend

that other States take advantage of the fine program made available to us by USDA."

Jim Buck Ross
Mississippi State Commissioner of Agriculture
and Commerce

PROBLEM-SOLVING FOR STATES

THE STATISTICAL REPORTING SERVICE HELPED SOUTH DAKOTA SELECT THE PROPER COMPUTER EQUIPMENT FOR THEIR DATA PROCESSING CENTER JOINED WITH ILLINOIS AND WISCONSIN IN JOINT USE OF COMPUTERS AND PROVIDED TECHNICAL EXPERTISE TO OHIO IN THE USE OF AVAILABLE COMPUTER TIME.

The Statistical Reporting Service Federal-State program promotes coordination and cooperation for economy and quality in the side-by-side operation of related, but separate, Federal and State agricultural statistics program. During the third year of FAR, the Statistical Reporting Service provided problem solving assistance to 4 States. The Ohio Department of Agriculture had problems in annual licensing of 9,000 bee-

keepers and in processing statistical data on commodities. In a "market check-off" program, computer usage was indicated. Statistical Reporting Service provided the technical expertise to enable Ohio to use computer time available through another State agency, thus saving scarce clerical time and expediting beekeepers licenses and in producing more timely outputs for the "market check-off" program. The State of South Dakota was given advice on the type of computer equipment they needed, and saved considerably over the equipment they had been considering. Wisconsin and Illinois were advised on their computer needs, resulting in joint Federal-State use of computers and resulting in a 17 percent savings in total costs for Wisconsin. Illinois savings appear to be similar.

STATES COUNSELED ON LAWS

PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION COUNSELED 9 STATES WHO NEEDED NEW OR UPDATED LAWS TO REGULATE MEAT PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS. SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE REVIEWED STATE LAWS TO IMPROVE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS.

As a guide to new or amended State legislation needed, Packers and Stockyards Administration counsels State and industry officials on provisions of the Federal statutes and experience in administering them. Testimony is given before State Legislature committees in support of proposed legislation. P&SA also helps States to implement new laws by suggesting forms for applying for licenses, regulations, and reports required for effective administration. Livestock producers get greater assurance of competitive marketing and payment for their livestock. Soil Conservation Service has reviewed State laws and told more than 3,000 local soil and water conservation districts of 150 major changes made in State laws and of other changes being considered that broaden the role of the local districts in meeting today's sharply increased environmental challenges.

SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE SYSTEMS GIVEN FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE

THE FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE HAS DEVELOPED A HANDBOOK FOR USE BY SCHOOLS IN MAINTAINING REQUIRED STANDARD FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT RECORDS TO SATISFY STATE, LOCAL, AND FEDERAL DATA NEEDS.

School food service operation requires certain record keeping for State, local, and Federal data needs. There are many common needs, and a standard method of maintaining the financial management records would increase efficiency. Food and Nutrition Service developed a handbook which has been distributed to selected schools for pilot testing. Assuming successful tests, the handbook will be distributed to all schools in Fiscal Year 1974. It will provide simplified record keeping and reporting requirements for schools and improved Federal-State-local information systems.

STATES ASSISTED IN EXPANDING EXPORT MARKETS

28 STATES AND 2 TRADE COUNCILS WERE PROVIDED WITH MANAGERIAL-TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ON EXPORT MATTERS

The Foreign Agricultural Service has assigned a Federal advisor to the Midwest International Agra-Trade Council, an association of the State Departments of Agriculture organized to promote agricultural exports. Assistance furnished to the trade council and the States resulted in further awareness by the States of export

promotion and development, wider participation by commercial companies in Foreign Agricultural Service foreign exhibits, and the pinpointing of export opportunities in selected markets abroad.

A LOOK TO THE FUTURE

USDA'S GRADUATE SCHOOL PROVIDED A SERIES OF FOUR FREE LECTURES ON DEVELOPING LEADERS IN STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

The Graduate School's involvement in FAR resulted in the development of a program entitled "Challenges in Developing Leaders in State and Local Governments." Lectures were given by a university president, a university professor, a major, and a personnel director of a large industrial firm in mid-May in the Department Auditorium. Attendees were from the Department of Agriculture and other Federal agencies.



Child Nutrition Program provides nutritious meals to youngsters.

Dedication of a Water Project by Farmers Home Administrator James V. Smith.



CHAPTER 2

INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION

A second area of emphasis in the Third Year of FAR was to "Improve Inter-Agency Coordination." In USDA, inter-agency coordination has long been a "way of life." An Office of Intergovernmental Affairs in the Office of the Secretary works closely with States through the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture and with USDA agencies and other Federal agencies to coordinate USDA programs. This Office provides a Secretary's Liaison Representative to each of the 10 Federal Regional Councils to help assure coordination of USDA programs with those of FRC agency members.

The application of FAR principles to program operations is exemplified by the USDA role in rural development. With a field delivery system at the county and local level reaching directly to the citizens and communities served and an operational philosophy of decentralization and close cooperative working arrangements with States and local units of government, a re-emphasis of this philosophy contributed much to the objectives of FAR.

This policy of coordination was reinforced by the Secretary in his memorandum of

October 1, 1971, which states: "... the participation of State and local officials in the formulation of Federal programs is of utmost importance. The President views such participation as essential. State and local officials should be consulted at an early stage of policy development."

Highlights of actions taken to improve coordination within and between Federal, State and Local governments and with the public served are included in this chapter.

CONFORM USDA FIELD UNIT BOUNDARIES WITH THOSE OF THE FEDERAL REGIONAL COUNCILS

AT THE BEGINNING OF FAR, AGRICULTURE OPERATED ITS PROGRAMS THROUGH 84 SEPARATE FIELD STRUCTURES, OF WHICH 32 INVOLVED DIFFERENT REGIONAL STRUCTURES. AS OF JUNE 30, 1972, PROGRAMS OPERATE THROUGH 69 FIELD STRUCTURES, 28 OF WHICH HAVE DIFFERENT REGIONAL STRUCTURES. FIVE REGIONAL STRUCTURES HAVE BEEN CONFORMED TO THE STANDARD FEDERAL REGIONS.

The President has announced as his ultimate goal the establishment of uniform boundaries and field office locations for all social and economic programs requiring interagency or intergovernmental coordination. Field organization structures of Agriculture programs were reviewed to determine (1) factors on which current field structures were based, and (2) what adjustments would be reasonable to make to conform to Regional Council boundaries. At the time the review was initiated in 1969, the Department's programs operated through 84 separate field structures, of which 32 involved regional structures. Program operations are

highly decentralized, with 97 percent of the some 15,500 offices being at State or local levels, the remainder being regional or sub-regional in scope.

Analysis was made of each of the 84 separate field structures and associated programs to determine what realignment of these structures would be feasible to achieve uniformity with Regional Council boundaries; also where our structures include both regional and State—was there a need for both? The number of separate field structures has been reduced to 69 with 28 different regional structures.

Of the 23 agencies or staff offices having field structures, 10 have regional structures. Five of these agencies have either realigned the regional boundaries of the agency or components of the agency to conform with the 10 Standard Regional Boundaries—or are in the process of complying.

Agricultural Marketing Service. Effective January 1, 1972, the two regions of Livestock Market News were modified to conform to a combination of the Standard Regions. One Market News region covers Standard Regions I-VI; the other, Regions VII-X.

Agricultural Research Service. Under a reorganization announced April 21, 1972, 4 regions were established which follow the

Standard Regional Boundaries with minor exceptions involving only 5 States, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. These exceptions were made so that the regional boundaries of ARS would coincide with those of the State Agricultural Experiment Stations, the main cooperator with ARS.

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. In April 1972 the Administrator formally announced his decision to establish common regional boundaries to conform all programs of Agricultural Quarantine Inspection, Plant Protection, and Animal Health to the Standard Regions. Agricultural Quarantine Inspection and Plant Protection offices will be combined in each region, with Animal Health regional desks remaining in Washington. These 3 organizations have over 700 field offices reporting to them. The completion of the involved consolidation and realignment of boundaries is scheduled for June of 1973.

In January 1972, the **Meat and Poultry Inspection Program** was realigned within a 5-region structure which substantially conforms to groupings of the Standard Regional Boundaries.

Commodity Exchange Authority. On September 2, 1971, the boundaries of its three regions were changed to conform to Federal

Regional Boundaries, with the exception of one State—Minnesota. The shifting of Minnesota would have created a serious imbalance in workload and would have resulted in a decrease in efficiency and good administration.

Extension Service. Although Extension Service does not have a regional structure or line authority over State Extension Directors, on August 31, 1971, Extension Service assured its interest in the Regional Boundaries concept by furnishing to each State Extension Service a copy of the President's report, "Restoring the Balance of Federalism," and requested each Director to work within the regional boundaries, where possible, in carrying out the Extension programs.

COOPERATION WITH THE FEDERAL REGIONAL COUNCILS

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE IS AN AD HOC MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL REGIONAL COUNCILS. FULLTIME SECRETARY'S LIAISON REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FEDERAL REGIONAL COUNCILS REPRESENT USDA INTERESTS.

In 1971 Secretary's Liaison Representatives from field program activities of Agriculture

agencies were appointed to work with the FRCs.

In March 1972, this liaison function was transferred to the Department's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (OIA). This Office coordinates USDA programs which relate to defense mobilization, natural disasters, and Federal Regional Councils. In March 1972, the decision was made to establish 10 OIA regions, conforming to the 10 Standard Regions. Implementation is underway, with OIA appointees named to head 3 of the 10 regions. These appointees also serve as Secretary's Liaison Representatives to the Federal Regional Councils.

FLOOD BRINGS FAST, COORDINATED USDA RESPONSE

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION TO MEET EMERGENCIES INVOLVES AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS IN MANY WAYS. HERE IS JUST ONE OF MANY EXAMPLES.

Torrential rains touched off flash floods Friday, June 9, 1972, in the Rapid City, South Dakota, area. Over 200 lives were lost—many hundreds were left homeless. Damages exceeded \$120 million. The State was declared a major disaster area Saturday, June 10, under P.L. 91-606. The

flooded area covered approximately 100 miles by 150 miles.

When the USDA Emergency Duty Officer learned of the disaster Saturday morning, June 10, he notified all USDA Washington representatives with disaster responsibilities. The Office of Intergovernmental Affairs regional representative in Denver left Sunday for Rapid City and coordinated the USDA effort with the Office of Emergency Preparedness coordinating team. The Food and Nutrition Service shipped 500 cases of assorted commodities into the area for mass feeding. Five thousand persons were fed Saturday night and about 4,000 on Sunday night in five centers.

A Food Stamp emergency arrangement was placed in effect with the State on June 11 and issuance offices were set up to take care of household feeding. Other USDA agencies—Farmers Home Administration, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Soil Conservation Service, and Extension Service—operated offices in the individual assistance center at Rapid City High School, assessing the damage to agriculture. The U.S. Forest Service estimated \$10 million damages in the National Forest Service areas, mostly to roads. The Forest Service, along with the

National Guard. used heavy tanks to haul needed water into Rapid City.

Sunday evening, June 11, the OIA Regional Representative participated on a 3-hour public TV panel with the Director of the Office of Emergency Preparedness and other members of the Federal Support Team to answer questions regarding Federal assistance available.

ADDED STATE AND LOCAL INPUT TO FEDERAL PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

ON OCTOBER 1, 1971, THE SECRETARY DIRECTED THAT "AGENCY HEADS ARE THEREFORE DIRECTED TO REVIEW THIS MATTER CLOSELY AND TO TAKE STEPS, BEGINNING WITH OUR FISCAL YEAR 1973 PROGRAM PLANNING, TO ASSURE CONSIDERATION AT POLICY-MAKING LEVELS OF THE VIEWS, IDEAS, PROBLEMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS."

Agencies are increasing their efforts in this area.

An example of the increased effort is the "Inform and Involve" program started by the



Man, West Virginia High School serves as Emergency Center for flood victims.

Forest Service to provide the public with timely information about their resource plans and programs in order to obtain the participation and views of all interested parties, including State and local government agencies, before management decisions are made. This policy has already proved successful in the acquisition of Lake Tahoe shoreline property in Nevada for inclusion in the Toiyabe National Forest, in land management decisions made for the Appalachian Mountain areas, and in the determination of possible management alternatives for primitive or wilderness recreation possibilities on National Forest lands in the East, South, and West.

WHAT IS THE OPTIMUM GEOGRAPHIC AREA FOR A FIELD OFFICE TO SERVE?

ARE FIELD ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES IN TUNE WITH MODERN TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION NETWORKS AND CHANGING REQUIREMENTS FOR SERVICE? TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION, CRITERIA WERE DEVELOPED FOR DETERMINING OPTIMUM GEOGRAPHIC AREA, ORGANIZATION, AND STAFFING OF LOCAL OFFICES OF OPERATIONS CARRIED OUT LARGELY THROUGH LOCAL OR COUNTY OFFICES. USE OF THE CRITERIA WILL

GUIDE THE DEPARTMENT IN PROVIDING THE MOST EFFECTIVE FIELD OFFICE STRUCTURE FOR SERVING RURAL AND URBAN COMMUNITIES AND WILL RESULT IN IMPROVED SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC.

The present number of field offices in the 4 agencies involved is:

Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service	2,878
Extension Service	3,570
Farmers Home Administration	2,060
Soil Conservation Service.....	3,111

A study found that the trend toward larger and fewer farms, increased numbers of city residents buying small tracts for rural homes, and trends in the economy and population had a similar impact on all the agencies. The four agencies reported that as a result of these changes, the type of requests for services was changing; many of the landowners were no longer in residence in the county, and the increasing numbers of part-time, "hobby," and absentee landowners had changed the traditional way of reaching these people. It was evident that the program for common housing of agency offices should be accelerated so that the public can obtain assistance needed at one location without the necessity of having to go to more than one building, or to another town.

Due consideration must be given to a maximum distance or travel time that the majority of the recipients of the agencies' service should be expected to travel.

Consideration also has to be given to the kinds of expertise needed in rendering a complete service to the rural and urban communities. If the type of services are of such volume and kind that the answers to the problems presented continually exceed the competence of the local resident staff, consideration has to be given to positioning and composition of specialist staff.

The study developed that the following factors are the most significant in the development of organizational structure and staffing criteria:

Work Load — Determination of work load by some realistic system which can be consistently applied to similar situations.

Staffing — Staffing guides based on work load upon which a determination of the numbers and kinds of staff needed at a given location or level can be based.

Access — Location of offices in relation to the public served should be such that clientele are, generally, within one hour's drive or 45 miles of the office. This will be influenced by the kind of service being furnished and whether to a group or to individuals.

Communications — Maximum feasible use

should be made of radio and telephone services including such innovations as telephone answering services, toll-free telephone service from clientele to agency offices, mobile radio units, and the like.

Facilities — County or local offices of all USDA agencies should be housed together in the same building wherever feasible, so as to provide one-stop service for clientele.

Geographic Area — Boundaries of local units should coincide with those of State planning groups wherever feasible.

Judgment Criteria — Atypical situations will be encountered in which judgment and experience will be the only guide.

These criteria have now been provided to the four agencies involved with a direction to develop required work load systems, staffing guides, and agency criteria for field office structure consistent with the foregoing. The agency head is to develop an action plan for restructuring of agency field organization with the cognizant Assistant Secretary or Program Director. Progress towards a planned restructuring of field offices will cover several years.

The primary benefit will be to the public served in assuring that a most efficient and economical field office structure is established for providing Department of Agriculture services to the public.

FOREST SERVICE RANGER DISTRICTS

FEWER RANGER DISTRICTS ARE MORE EFFICIENT AND OFFER SAVINGS TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

The Forest Service made a study to determine the best possible size of National Forest System field organization units. Many of these units were established when the Forest Service was created in 1905. Some were established to meet needs of the times. Now, with modern communications and transportation systems, a field unit can administer a larger territory than was possible in earlier years.

From the study, a new Forest Service policy concerning the size of Ranger Districts has resulted in fewer, more efficient, and better staffed field units. In the past three years, the number of Ranger Districts has dropped from 797 to 742. This new policy has brought better service to the public and an annual savings in operating costs over the past three years of about \$1.25 million.

ONE-STOP SERVICE

CONSOLIDATED HOUSING OF USDA COUNTY OFFICES WAS INCREASED FROM 1,658 TO

1,669 DURING THIRD YEAR OF FAR.

USDA agencies in 1,669 counties are now located in one town and in one building through increased emphasis given to this program because of FAR. Consolidated housing of USDA agencies enables users of their services to obtain one-stop service. There were 11 additional consolidated housing projects completed in the Third Year of FAR. The goal is to achieve consolidated housing in all counties where feasible.

FAR PRINCIPLES AT WORK — THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

AGRICULTURE'S INVOLVEMENT IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT IS A CASE STUDY OF THE APPLICATION OF THE FAR PRINCIPLES IN PROGRAM OPERATIONS. ITS OPERATIONAL PHILOSOPHY IS THE VERY ESSENCE OF FAR BASED AS IT IS UPON CONCEPTS OF DECENTRALIZATION, CLOSE COOPERATIVE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS WITH STATES AND LOCAL UNITS OF GOVERNMENT, AND A FIELD DELIVERY SYSTEM AT THE COUNTY AND LOCAL LEVEL REACHING DIRECTLY TO THE CITIZENS AND COMMUNITIES SERVED.

Several of the services of U.S. Department of Agriculture represent an embodiment of the FAR principles—they are integral with the President's Federalism concepts. A prime example are those services that play a part in Rural Development.

In a message to the Congress February 1, 1972, President Nixon said:

"Here then are the basic principles which should guide our new approach to rural community development:

"We must treat the problems of rural America as a part of a general strategy for balanced growth.

"We must reverse the flow of power to the Federal Government and return more power to State and local officials.

"We must fight the rigidities of narrowly focused categorical grants.

"We must facilitate more adequate advance planning.

"We must provide adequate resources and credit, in ways which attract greater private resources for development.

"We must develop rural America in ways which protect agriculture and the environment."

Rural Development has been correctly referred

to as a process. It is defined as making rural America a better place to live and work. What is implied in this definition is that the rural community—the community of the people concerned—will be better in its value terms because of action taken to make it that way. Rural Development is, given the value judgments of the community, manipulating one or more available resources to improve the standing of that community as compared with where it stood prior to the action.

A community considers its resources - human, natural, economic - acknowledges its position in the current society - this is where it is now. It evaluates these items one by one with respect to changes it desires to make. It democratically and rationally decides on what resources will be made available to accomplish the selected changes and uses them. Periodically it evaluates its progress. The continued application of this cycle by any given community may well be called the process of rural community development. And the sum total of these actions throughout the countryside might be summarized as Rural Development.

"Since the establishment of our regional community development committees, we have,

as a group, gained a greater insight concerning the forces which affect a community's ability to develop and direct its destiny. During this period we have become increasingly aware of the forces created by the people themselves, and the resources they command. In recognition of this fact our regional committees working with communities have stressed the need for the people themselves to understand what they want and what they need. A strong community awareness program usually results in the merger of these two areas. We feel that such a merger is a necessary prerequisite to an effective development effort. From this point the community and the committee work together to attract new resources but most importantly to more effectively utilize those resources that are already available to that community.

"Our current feeling is that while a community-by-community approach is at times painfully slow, it has a most lasting effect."

Chairman
New York State Rural
Development Committee
June 1, 1972

There are misconceptions of Rural Development. Granted that most any positive action taken in rural America should contribute to a better rural society. However, the major input in the Rural Development process as recognized by USDA is that of the people who live in the rural area and for which specific attention is directed. Representatives of the private sector, and government at all levels help to achieve the fruits of this process but they are supportive to the people in achieving the full realization and greatest achievement of the combined efforts.

The Department of Agriculture is particularly fitted for this effort in that it is based upon concepts of decentralization, close cooperative working arrangements with States and local units of government, and a field delivery system at the county and local level reaches directly to the citizens and communities served.

Membership of the Rural Development Committees includes representatives of the Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration, Rural Electrification Administration, the State Cooperative Extension Service, and the Economic Research Service. These Committees are operating at the national, State and local levels. Relationships exist at the State level with the Governors' offices or State planning agencies, at the area or

district level, and at county levels. As Secretary Butz, speaking to the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations, said: "We've moved the decision-making process for rural development closer to the people at the State and local levels. That is where it must be centered if real development is to continue. You folks in Pennsylvania know that lesson well."

Committee involvement differs State by State and committee by committee and in terms of what services are necessary. The following two examples illustrate how local people use the Rural Development process:

Adequate housing in rural Bedford County, Pennsylvania, was scarce. Permanent housing was more expensive than in other surrounding counties, even though average wages were lower in Bedford County. There were few local home builders. Most new housing was in mobile homes and this, in itself, was creating problems. The activity decided on was to coordinate ideas and assistance in working with community leaders so that more new home builders could be located who would build a low- to medium-priced home in the county.

Local lay leaders and governmental officials were involved. These included ministers, township supervisors, home builders and home

builders associations, and the local rural electrification cooperatives.

Each agency on the County Rural Development Committee participated. The County Extension Agent coordinated the activity and arranged for Forest Service house plans to be reviewed by the Committee for selection of an applicable low-cost plan. FHA assisted in establishing standards, provided information on financing and worked with builders in adjoining counties who were building FHA-financed homes and might consider building in Bedford County. These builders also helped develop usable simple house plans. REA, through the local cooperative, used its newsletter for inventory of interest, plan printing, and other ideas about the activity. SCS prepared soils information to aid in selecting building sites. As a result of the initiative of local people and the services of their government, more and better rural housing is being effectively achieved.

The Hillsdale County, Michigan, Redevelopment Committee was organized in July 1970. Within a few months, with the organized involvement of over 100 community leaders and citizens, an Overall Economic Development Program was prepared. This was submitted and approved at the State and Federal

levels and Hillsdale County was declared an eligible redevelopment area. The following benefits have accrued:

Industry has committed itself to build new plants and additions costing approximately \$6,335,000 for land and buildings. Federal loans of \$1,707,000 at a low rate of interest have already been made or committed for projects. Prior to being designated a redevelopment area the county was losing industry and jobs. One loan to a business represented a savings of about \$250,000 over the period of the loan making the difference between survival and closing down.

Expansion of water systems in three communities will provide needed water supplies for industrial growth. Federal grants of \$417,000 and loans of \$379,000 have been assured. Neither would have been possible if the county had not been designated a redevelopment area.

In the preparation of the OEDP it was estimated that 1,438 new jobs would have to be created by 1975 to provide adequate job opportunities consistent with national averages. With all this development, about 1,000 new jobs will have been created. One thousand jobs will mean about: \$3,060,000 more retail sales; \$8,550,000 more State-equalized valuation for property taxes; \$3,000,000 more bank deposits; and \$7,200,000 more personal income.

To summarize — Rural development leadership through the U.S. Department of Agriculture is:

1. Treating the problems of rural America as a part of a general strategy for balanced growth by directing appropriate coordinating efforts through the network of national, State and local rural development committees.

2. Returning more power to the States and local officials since they are now more deeply involved with the people's decisions in what is needed and wanted and are helping to provide services to attain these needs and desires.

3. Encouraging more individual and group action at the local level and thereby assuring greater and more effective planning.

4. Providing more adequate credit particularly for housing, water and waste disposal facilities and utilities. This should attract more private resources for development.

5. Launching new environmental thrusts and giving close attention to the needs voiced by rural people. Therefore, the environment and the agricultural industry is being improved.

Therefore those principles as outlined by President Nixon are at work through the network of Rural Development Committees—at work to serve all rural areas through the nation.



Getting a rural development project started.

REA is making modern electric and telephone service available.



CHAPTER 3

IMPROVE INTRA-AGENCY ASSISTANCE SYSTEMS

CUTTING RED TAPE

USDA utilizes grants, loans, cooperative arrangements, and technical assistance in the delivery of its program services to the public. Using flow charting and analysis procedures, every program process was reviewed and possibilities for simplification identified. Reduction in processing time or effort was effected in 37 different programs.

Operational procedures were simplified and tailored to meet the needs of the public served in many programs. Significant accomplishments are highlighted in this chapter.

REA CUTS \$1.6 MILLION OF RED TAPE

SYSTEMWIDE ENGINEERING STUDIES AS A PREREQUISITE FOR LOAN APPLICATIONS WERE MODIFIED TO REQUIRE STUDIES ON ONLY THOSE TELEPHONE EXCHANGE AREAS COVERED BY THE LOAN APPLICATION WITHIN THE SYSTEM - NOT THE WHOLE SYSTEM. THE RESULT - BORROWERS SAVE \$1.6 MILLION IN THE COST TO THEM OF ENGINEERING SERVICES.

In the rural telephone program during the second year of the FAR effort, the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) simplified loan applications and associated engineering studies to finance system improvements and extend telephone systems.

These changes give greater flexibility in adapting required preloan data and engineering studies to the circumstances of a particular application and reduce the complexity of submissions and the cost to borrowers.

The requirement for systemwide engineering studies as part of a loan application was modified to limit such studies to those parts of the system covered by the loan application.

In another engineering simplification, the scope of area coverage designs, when required

by loan proposal, was limited to the specific types of facilities included in the loan. Thus an applicant may limit his engineering study to the essentials for that loan and cut costs of applying.

A simplified loan application format for subscriber forecast data and facility cost estimates was extended to more applications for system improvements and extensions.

Using the former procedures and formats, the average cost was estimated at about \$6 per subscriber. With the modifications, the average cost for pre-loan engineering studies is about \$2 per subscriber. The loan program in the past three years has averaged approximately 230-250 loans per year. About 80 percent (200 loans) would be affected by the modifications. The average borrower provides service to 2,100 subscribers in small towns and surrounding rural areas. Savings in cost of just the engineering studies to loan applicants thus exceeds \$1.6 million annually. The time to process loan applications will be much less.

UNIVERSITIES BENEFIT FROM ONE USDA STANDARD RESEARCH AGREEMENT

A STANDARD RESEARCH AGREEMENT TO BE USED FOR ALL GRANTS, CONTRACTS, AND

AGREEMENTS WITH UNIVERSITIES HAS BEEN PROMULGATED, ACHIEVING DEPARTMENT-WIDE UNIFORMITY IN FISCAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS WITH UNIVERSITIES.

Excluding formula grants, there are now more than 3,200 grants, contracts, agreements, and memorandums of understanding for research projects involving Department programs with universities. A study group seeking possible standardization of the fiscal and administrative requirements of these arrangements found that some fiscal requirements resulted in the universities having to establish special accounting procedures. For example, the agency's form on which the university billed for services performed did not lend itself to use of a computer. The agency required categories of cost that were not compatible with the universities' cost accounting system even though theirs met accepted accounting standards. Administrative requirements varied as to accountability for property, reports submitted, records maintained, and the like. These requirements were often buried in "boilerplate" provisions and in some agreements were in the project specifications.

A long step toward eliminating confusion has been taken by developing and prescribing a

single Department-wide set of general provisions for all grants, contracts, and agreements for research with universities. These provisions, developed in consultation with university representatives and program officials, have been published. Any grant, contract, or cooperative agreement may now include these provisions by reference. The agreement document is more readily understood since it deals principally with how we agree to carry on the research work. The effective date for use of these standard research agreements was January 1, 1971.

CONGRESS ASSISTS IN CUTTING REVIEW TIME

CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES WAIVE REQUIREMENT FOR 30-DAY PRIOR NOTICE OF COMMITMENTS.

Resource Conservation and Development Projects are designed to help people take better care of their natural resources and to improve their community's economy. The projects are locally initiated, sponsored, and directed. Local sponsors submit an application for assistance,

approved by the Governor or his designated State agency, to the appropriate Soil Conservation Service State Conservationist. When the Secretary of Agriculture authorizes planning assistance, under quotas authorized by Congressional Committees, SCS helps the sponsors develop a plan of action. Once the plan is developed, reviewed, and approved, the Secretary authorizes USDA agencies to help local sponsors carry out project measures. RC&D funds may be available for technical help and cost-sharing aid.

When RC&D legislation was first approved, 2 Committees of Congress expressed a desire to be notified before any advance commitments were made for planning or operations. Before each step the Committees were notified and a period of 30 days was allowed for each of them to comment - a total of 60 days' delay by the time a project reached the operations stage. Over several years, nearly all comments received from the Committees were simply an acknowledgment of the notification. The Committees have now waived the period for comment, merely requiring notification that a project *has been* authorized for planning or for operation. A saving of 60 days has thus been made in moving projects from the application to the construction phase.

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS BENEFIT FROM FNS ACTION

IN EACH OF THE COMMODITY PROGRAMS OF FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE, REVIEWS WERE MADE WITH STATES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO DETERMINE THE NEEDS FOR AND TIMING OF REPORTS. AS A RESULT, A NUMBER OF SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE. THE REVIEW IS CONTINUING.

State and local government bodies have become increasingly critical of the rising number and complexity of the reports required under Federal programs. Federal data requirements in some cases had created undue reporting burdens at the State and local levels.

All reporting systems and reporting requirements for Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) programs were reviewed at Federal, State, local government, and client levels.

A number of reports have been improved or eliminated. The State agencies no longer need to prepare and submit 15 different reports.

"Turnaround" forms were also put into use whereby certain identifying information is placed on the forms by FNS prior to sending them to the respondents. This not only results in more

accuracy in the overall data system, but also relieves the data sources of certain work since they no longer need to enter the identifying data on the forms. State agencies were formerly required to prepare lengthy applications and justifications for State administrative funds on Child Nutrition programs. These were replaced by a more simplified "letter of assurance" process resulting in time savings for States.

The former detailed State Plans of Operation under the Food Stamp Program were replaced by a more simplified "general agreement" procedure which results in State agencies submitting fewer amendments to the plans in order to reflect changes in their operational procedures. This has eliminated certain work and has simplified the activity.

Local health facilities and other agencies applying for participation in the Supplemental Food Program have an option of submitting a *detailed plan* of operation for *each* county or facility in the program in the State or submitting a consolidated plan of operation, which requires one State plan and an agreement and an addendum for each county or facility. Sixteen States chose to use the simplified consolidated plan of operations, and 20 States, for reasons of their own, chose to use the more detailed plan for each county or facility in the program in the State.

When ordering food commodities for direct distribution under the Food Distribution Program of the Food and Nutrition Service, State distributing agencies previously prepared a delivery order for each carlot. An abbreviated order form, which permits the entering of multiple carloads on the one form, was instituted. A data bank containing the names and addresses of consignees, along with related shipping instructions, was established enabling the preparation of complete shipping instructions by computer. This has simplified the operation, and cut \$35,720 from the original cost of \$145,067 - about 25 percent saved by the Federal government. Although State savings are not available, it is estimated that the ratio will approximate that of the Federal government.

STATES BENEFIT FROM EXTENSION SERVICE ACTION

EXTENSION AGREEMENTS WITH STATES WERE REDUCED FROM EIGHT SEPARATE AGREEMENTS TO ONE COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT

Extension Service adopted the recommendation of a special FAR Task Force to

combine 8 separate project agreements which each State has with the Department into one single agreement covering all 8 projects. These projects involve agricultural production and marketing, family living, food and nutrition, youth work, and community development. The number of agreements has thus been reduced from over 400 to 53. Most of the time previously required to revise, review, and process agreements is eliminated, and paperwork management is improved for the States and for the Service.

FARMERS BENEFIT FROM ASCS IMPROVEMENTS

THE AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION AND CONSERVATION SERVICE (ASCS) MADE SEVERAL OPERATIONAL CHANGES TO GIVE THE FARMER FASTER SERVICE ON PAYMENTS DUE HIM AND TO CUT RED TAPE IN THE OPERATION OF PROGRAMS SERVING THE FARMER.

The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service coupled speedup reporting procedures with systems for computer processing of payments to farmers under acreage diversion programs. The system was geared to get most payments to farmers in July.

In the past, farmers waited until after September 1 for a large share of their payments. The streamlined procedures enabled nearly 3 million farmers to receive the entire \$3.3 billion payments due them for the 1970 wheat, feed grain, and cotton programs six to eight weeks earlier than ever before and in a single full payment rather than piecemeal. This helped many farmers to meet financing problems without having to borrow at high interest rates. Savings in time and money for the administration of the program payments also were brought about. The new system was so successful that it was included in the Agricultural Act of 1970.

The Government is saving \$12 million a year in administrative costs, and farmers are getting more than \$3 billion in farm program payments two months sooner than before - which saves them substantial amounts in financing costs. It's done by having farmers themselves certify that they've met their farm program compliance obligations, rather than having USDA teams measure each farm. The farmer compliance certification is followed up by spot-checks for accuracy.

The system has now been extended throughout the country and farmers will make more than 3 million certifications of program compliance this year. Their certifications will be handled on automatic data processing equipment so more

than \$3 billion in payments can be sent out immediately after the beginning of the new fiscal year.

Forward contracts are becoming more and more important in farm marketing - but until 1971 a grain farmer who contracted to sell his commodities lost eligibility for government commodity loans. In effect, farmers were forced to choose between two effective marketing tools; they were forbidden to use both.

The restriction was lifted with the 1971 grain crops, and farmers can now contract to sell their commodities for future delivery and keep them under commodity loans until they make delivery. This gives farmers more freedom to market their production at the best possible price, and increases the importance of the free market. In the long run, it means more farmer decision-making and increased producer returns.

A new system begun for the 1969 crop year by the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service reduces marketing costs for the individual cotton producer, hastens redemption of loan cotton, permits cotton to move more freely into trade channels, and avoids federal acquisitions of unredeemed loan collateral. ASCS did this by allowing individual producers to give a power of attorney and sign a marketing agreement with an agent to market their cotton, obtain loans on the cotton, or pool the loan cotton

Farmers in Marion County, Iowa, said, "The earlier final payments come in very handy for young farmers like myself with a heavy debt load," and "I think the plan has worked well. Farmers are basically honest and their neighbors are good watch dogs."

A farmer in Delaware County, Ohio, said, "This is a must for modern Ag who have to be able to hedge against price fluctuation."

with other producers for marketing. In the past, the individual producer could either forfeit his cotton in the federal loan program or redeem it for marketing. Redeeming it would increase his handling costs. So he often did not redeem it, his return was smaller, the federal agency acquired more unredeemed loan collateral, and movement of cotton in marketing was restricted.

BORROWERS AND THE TAXPAYER BENEFIT FROM STREAMLINED LOAN PROCEDURES OF FHA

*REVISIONS IN LOAN PROCEDURES BY
FARMERS HOME ADMINISTRATION—
RANGING FROM THE TITLE CLEARANCE AND
LOAN APPLICANT INVESTIGATIONS THROUGH
PRINTING OF FORMS IN SPANISH - SAVE
MONEY, TIME, AND TEMPER.*

In September 1970, FHA developed the "Packaging Concept" to provide instructions to builders, developers, and others who may want to package applications for rural housing loans for submission to FHA County Supervisors. A guide which explains and illustrates the packaging concept was published and distributed to builders. Under this concept, the packager provides FHA with the completed application,

verification of employment, information on property (aids in the appraisal function), and dwelling specifications or option to purchase property. Submission of this package relieves the county supervisor of certain basic loan actions. His duties then begin with ordering a credit report and scheduling the appraisal.

Also, in September 1970, FHA joined with various other governmental agencies for use of Federal Housing Administration's (HUD) credit report sources. County supervisors are now able to order credit reports on loan applicants. Credit bureaus furnish reports within eight days. This procedure not only offers relief to the county supervisor, but results in a substantial savings in processing time for applicants who have recently moved from another area.

Until 1971, at the time the loan dockets were reviewed, every case had to go before the county committee at least twice. On the first trip the county committee made a tentative certification as to the applicant's eligibility. On the second trip, after the loan docket was assembled and the appraisal made, the county committee certified the amount of the loan. However, with the advent of the packaging concept and credit bureaus, all information preliminary to the committee meeting is obtained within 15 to 30 days. Loan dockets are presented to the county committee for its

certification as to the applicant's eligibility and the amount of the loan at the same time. This procedure eliminates the need for scheduling the loan proceedings through two committee meetings.

Until recently, there were four equal opportunity forms necessary in loan dockets under the construction method. This has now been reduced to one. Three evaluation forms have been combined, monthly payment procedures instituted, and other procedures streamlined.

Time saved - an average of 54 days—a reduction of one-third—in a program involving over 100,000 loans annually.

FHA recently put into effect a new housing commitment authority to encourage builders and developers to build housing on a volume basis. This should provide for a wide selection of homes to more efficiently meet the housing needs of rural families.

In Farmers Home Administration loan programs, 12,500 loans are made annually which require title clearance. Only one attorney in each county was designated to clear titles, causing delays - oftentimes the designated attorney wasn't available. A procedural change now requires a minimum of two and, in some counties, four designated attorneys. Borrowers now may obtain prompt title clearance services

since they have access to several designated attorneys.

Investigations of loan applicants were required prior to making loans. Instructions were revised to allow State Directors, with prior approval of the Administrator of Farmers Home Administration, to waive applicant investigations in major disaster areas declared by the President. This will save many work hours of county personnel who ordinarily made such investigations, and borrowers will receive their loans much faster.

Under former procedures, when Farmers Home Administration operating and emergency loans were made, a Security Agreement was obtained to perfect the Government's lien on the crops and chattels serving as loan security. If the borrower applied for additional operating funds the next year, a subsequent agreement required listing not only the current crop as part of the security but relisting the equipment and livestock from the earlier Security Agreement. For this kind of additional loan, a revised Security Agreement form that covers only crops is now being used. It saves preparation time in FHA county offices and speeds service to borrowers.

Historically, FHA funds were advanced in one check at the time the first funds were needed. The use of commercial interim financing is now

required whenever legally possible. More than half the States are now using this procedures, and others are working to remove legal barriers to its use. This procedure allows borrowers to obtain funds needed at the exact time needed, interest rates are negotiated as low as possible, local lenders are involved with projects, and FHA realizes an interest savings.

Under the Rural Housing-Individual Loan Program, owners of farm and non-farm tracts in rural areas may receive loans to obtain or improve homes. Applications for non-farm loans are reviewed at the county, district, and State levels before they can be approved. As of January 8, 1970, one step in this review process, the appraisal of the applicant's property, has been delegated from the district to the county supervisors. Total processing time thus has been reduced from 35 to 21 days, or 40 percent. In addition, three forms previously required of applicants have been replaced by a single form—for 90 percent of the applications. Nearly 67,000 loans were made in 1970 under this program. In 1971, 109,204 loans were made; 1972 loans are estimated to be at approximately the same volume.

When a natural disaster causes severe property damage or crop losses, farmers and ranchers may obtain assistance through the



New home financed by Farmers Home Administration.

Emergency Loan Program of the Farmers Home Administration. In fiscal year 1970, 12,778 emergency loans were made totaling \$89,257,100. 19,804 emergency loans were made in 1971, and the 1972 volume is estimated at 20,600. Normally, approval of loans to individuals must be preceded by the designation by the Secretary of an entire county as a disaster area. Under procedures adopted in June of 1970, State Directors were authorized to direct the receiving of emergency loan applications in non-designated areas when the number of those needing emergency loans in a county is estimated to be 25 or less. As a result, processing time in such cases has been reduced from 60 to 30 days, or 50 percent. There were 456 loans processed under this revised procedure during fiscal year 1970, 927 in 1971, and an estimated 69 for 1972.

Under the Rural Rental Housing Loan Program, loans are made to private non-profit corporations and consumer cooperatives to provide modest cost housing for low and moderate income residents in rural areas. Twenty direct loans and 490 insured loans were made in fiscal year 1970 to provide housing for approximately 3,000 families. Authority to approve such loans at State and lower levels were generally increased from \$60,000 to \$200,000 in 1969.

This resulted in an average reduction in processing time per loan from 50 to 36 days, or 28 percent, for some 100 loans in fiscal year 1970 that previously had to be approved at agency headquarters. The borrowers, and ultimately other residents waiting for housing, benefit by this speedup in service.

Borrowers and builders benefit through simplified forms, procedures, and their ability to deal directly with FHA field offices which have been delegated authority to approve applications and loans. One refinement in the simplification of forms is pointed up by the following example: In areas with a heavy concentration of the Spanish-speaking, FHA has printed forms in Spanish and assigned Spanish-speaking loan officials to these areas.

AUTHORITY DELEGATED TO FIELD OFFICIALS

BRINGING DECISION-MAKING CLOSE TO WHERE DELIVERY OR SERVICES OCCURS IS A BASIC TENET OF THE FEDERAL ASSISTANCE REVIEW PROGRAM. EACH PROGRAM DELIVERY PROCESS WAS REVIEWED WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF DELEGATING AUTHORITY

TO FIELD OFFICES WHEREVER FEASIBLE. THESE ARE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

Loan and grant approval authorities of Farmers Home Administration county and State offices were increased. County Supervisors' single family housing authority was raised from \$25,000 to \$40,000, and State Directors' labor housing authority was increased from \$60,000 to \$100,000.

Under the Rural Environmental Assistance Program of the Department of Agriculture, the Federal government shares the cost with the participant for special high-priority conservation projects. These projects benefit participating farmers, ranchers, and woodland owners, as well as the communities in which projects are implemented. About 450 special projects in over 400 counties were approved in fiscal year 1970, at a cost of nearly \$6 million for the Federal share. Comparable figures for 1971 and 1972 (estimated) are 562 special projects, \$5.5 million for the Federal share, and 600 special projects, \$6.0 million. Authority to approve special projects was delegated from the national office to State Committees in December 1969. Total processing time was cut from 63 to 53 days, or 16 percent.

Resource Conservation and Development Projects are designed to help people take better care of their natural resources and improve the economy of their community. Nearly 300 projects are installed each year. Approvals of project measures heretofore required from Washington have been delegated to State headquarters of the Soil Conservation Service.

The Forest Service delegated final action authority in 14 program areas to Regional Foresters and Directors. Examples are approval authority for impact reports for large reservoir projects of other resource development agencies and approval of project proposals involving use of pesticides.

Forestry research grants are being approved 16 days earlier by elimination of two reviews and approvals at the national level. Authority to award grants has been delegated to the directors of 10 regional research stations.

Recognizing that State offices of the Soil Conservation Service had attained the required level of engineering competence, authority was delegated to them to approve engineering plans for watershed projects. Applicants gained two to three weeks in getting their projects started. The approximately 250 engineering plans submitted each year had previously gone to one of four SCS Technical Service Centers.

"I feel the more that decisions are brought to a state and even a county level is the best for everyone concerned. Our state and county committeemen are generally reliable people and can handle each local situation to a better advantage than someone a 1000 miles away."
Benton County, Iowa, farmer

Delegations of authority to issue certain regulations and subpoenas have been made from the Secretary to agency administrators in selected areas; field contracting authorities have been increased; property acquisition authorities have been increased; personnel staffing authorities have been delegated; and numerous other administrative delegations have been made to enable field officials to decide and take prompt actions.

INSPECTION PROGRAM REPORTING SYSTEM UNDER REVIEW

A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF ALL MEAT AND POULTRY INSPECTION REPORTING SYSTEMS HAS RESULTED TO DATE IN ELIMINATION OF 21 REPORTS AND IMPROVEMENT IN 38.

To reduce the time spent by Meat and Poultry Inspection Program personnel in reporting and to permit them to devote more time to their inspection activities, the Agricultural Marketing Service requested the National Archives and Records Service to conduct a comprehensive review of all Meat and Poultry Inspection reporting systems. The study team is

concentrating on identifying and eliminating nonessential reports, and on improving the preparation, dissemination, and use of essential reports. To date 21 reports were eliminated and 38 improved. Further improvements are anticipated, including greater use of automated data processing.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSTRAINTS REMOVED

HEADQUARTERS AND FIELD OFFICIALS WERE ASKED WHAT CONSTRAINTS SHOULD BE REMOVED TO ENABLE THEM TO DO THEIR JOB BETTER AND TO IMPROVE SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC.

Constraints imposed by Department and agency regulations individually are not of serious consequence, but in total represent a host of irritating restrictions on the authority of field managers. The sheer number of such constraints may result in a reluctance on the part of managers to act, fearing that some rule may be violated. Reducing the number of these constraints to a comprehensive set of reasonable controls is a valuable contribution to streamlining program processes.

Over a three year period, some 193 constraints were reported, of which 68 were removed. Action to clarify procedures or otherwise eliminate 25 more is in process. The need for the remainder will be periodically reexamined. Department agencies report the removal of some 60 other constraints within their agency administrative processes.

ACTION PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

The Federal Assistance Review program will continue under guidance of the Office of Management and Budget. The principles of Federalism inherent in the FAR program are now woven into the fabric of program management in this Department. Continuation of the application of these principles to program operations will occur within this framework.

The Secretary directed on January 18, 1972 (Memorandum No. 1761), that "the resources of State and local governments and of the private sector shall be utilized wherever feasible in the operation of the domestic programs of this Department. Continuing direction shall be given to the selection, standardization, and simplification of operational processes used in

the delivery of program services." The action plan for implementing this policy (P&O) Handbook No. 6) provides for an ongoing effort recognizing that progress towards the FAR objectives will extend over a period of several years. Action will be focused each year on those program activities wherein there is the greatest potential for accomplishment.

Responsibility for providing necessary assistance on intergovernmental aspects of the FAR program has been assigned to the Assistant to the Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs. Secretary's Liaison officials have been designated to the Federal Regional Councils and coordination between Agriculture programs and those of member agencies of the FRC's will be strengthened. Similarly, coordination with Federal Executive Boards has been strengthened by designation of Secretary's representatives to these Boards. Program managers will look to the Assistant to the Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs for necessary assistance for implementation of the intergovernmental aspects of FAR activities.

Decentralization of organizational units and delegations of authority to regional, state and local offices will continue. A total review of all authorities is in process to result in a uniform system of documentation and delegation. A

management review of all agency organizational elements at headquarters locations will be undertaken to enable informed decisions on further decentralization.

Personnel mobility assignments under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act will continue to be made and the number thereof increased wherever this will contribute to overall governmental administration of Agriculture programs. Training of officials in FAR principles and programs will continue with emphasis on including field USDA and State, County and local officials in training programs.

Streamlining of procedures—cutting red tape—will continue in all programs. Monitoring of progress is now built in to the program evaluation process of the Department.

The effectiveness of management in many programs of this Department will hereafter be measured in significant part by the progress made in carrying out these principles of Federalism.



. . . . the resources of State and local governments, and of the private sector shall be utilized wherever feasible in the operation of the domestic programs of this Department. Continuing direction shall be given to the selection, standardization and simplification of operational processes used in the delivery of program services.

Earl L. Butz
Secretary of Agriculture
Memorandum No. 1761,
January 18, 1972



